

Citizen Complaint and Use of Force Data

While the City of Fairfax Police Department had more than 30,000 citizen contacts during the 2003 calendar year, the Department received only 16 citizen complaints alleging police misconduct. No complaint involved an allegation of excessive force by an officer. In addition to the citizen complaints, the Department initiated 8 internal complaints regarding the conduct of its employees. The Department noted an increased use of email by citizens filing complaints in 2003 and the overall number of complaints from the community has decreased for the fourth year in a row.

The 24 complaints investigated during 2003 involved concerns such as improper application of law, improper application of Department policy or procedure, and allegations of misconduct. Following an internal investigation of each incident, 16 of the complaints were found to be unsubstantiated. In 8 cases, an employee was found to have violated Department policy and appropriate corrective action was taken and/or discipline was administered.

“Our goal is to exceed the public’s expectations of professional service in every citizen contact. To do that requires strong organizational values, high standards of conduct, and most important, every employee’s commitment to excellence. Treating all citizens with respect and preserving their dignity, even in arrest situations, is a goal of our officers and they do it well. It is an example of their consistent professionalism.”

We fairly and thoroughly investigate all complaints, regardless of how they are brought to our attention, and we provide detailed responses to our citizens. We try to use the process to rebuild the trust relationship and restore the citizen’s confidence in the Police Department.”

Colonel Richard J. Rappoport
Chief of Police

In over 30,000 contacts for 2003, including 1,628 criminal arrests, there were no allegations of excessive use of force by an officer. In 67 arrest cases, suspects resisted arrest and physical control techniques were applied by the officer. In two cases the arresting officer used a chemical irritant (pepper spray) to overcome the resistance. In the remaining 65 cases, officers used physical force and/or control techniques to overcome the resistance. Eleven of the 65 suspects received minor injuries and three officers were injured.